

Oxford Democrat

No. 11, Vol. 6, New Series.

OXFORD DEMOCRAT,

PUBLISHED EVERY TUESDAY, BY

G. W. Gillett,

EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

TERMS:—One Dollar and Fifty Cents in advance.
ADVERTISING inserted in reasonable terms;—the Proprietor not being accountable for any error beyond the amount charged for the advertisement. A reasonable deduction will be made for cash in advance.

Book and Job Printing

EXECUTED WITH NEATNESS AND DESPATCH.

Poetry.

A MOTHER'S SMILE.

BY A. E. CARPENTER.

There are clouds that must overshadow us—
There are griefs that all must know—
There are sorrows that have made us—
Feel the tide of human woe;
But the deepest, darkest sorrow,
Though it tear the heart awhile,
Hope's cheering ray may borrow
From a mother's welcome smile!

There are days in youth that greet us—
With a ray too bright to last—
There are cares of age to meet us—
When those sunny days are past;
But the past scenes hover o'er us,
And gives back the heart awhile,
All that memory can restore us
In a mother's welcome smile!

There are scenes and sunny places—
On which memory loves to dwell—
There are many happy faces—
Who have known and loved us well;
But 'mid joy or 'mid dejection,
There is nothing can beguile—
That can show the fond affection
Of a mother's welcome smile!

HOPE.

If Hope be dead—why seek to live?
For what besides has life to give?
Love, Life, and Youth, and Beauty too,
If Hope be dead—say! what are you?

Love without Hope! it cannot be;
There is a vessel on you sea,
Becalmed and sunless as Despair,
And know—'tis hopeless Love floats there.

Life without Hope! O that is not,
To live; but day by day, to rot,
With feelings cold and passions dead;
To wander o'er the world and tread
Upon its beauties; and to gaze,
Quite vacant, o'er its flowery maze,
Oh! think, if this be Life! then say—
"Who lives when Hope hath fled away."

Youth without Hope! An endless night,
Trees which have felt the cold spring's blight,
The lightning's flashes, and the thunder's strife,
Yet pine away a weary life
Which older would have sunk and died
Beneath the strokes their youth defied—
But, cursed with length of days are left
To rot at youth of Hope bereft.

And Beauty, too, when Hope is gone—
Has lost the ray in which it shone;
And seen without this borrowed light,
Has lost the beam that made it bright.
Now what avail the silken hair,
The gentle smile, the gentle air,
The beaming eye, and glance refined—
Faint semblance of the purer mind—
A gold dust, sparkling in the sun,
Points where the richer strata run,
All's! they now just seem to be
Bestowed to mock at Misery;
They speak of days long, long gone by,
Then point to cold Reality;
And with a death-like smile they say—
"Oh! what are we when Hope's away?"

Thus Love, Life, and Beauty too,
When seen without Hope's brightening hue,
All sink in Misery's saddest tone,
"Why seek to live if Hope be gone?"

THE STONY SILLIMAN.

THE DEVIL'S PULPIT.

A LEGEND OF THE HUDSON.

BY T. W. MELIGAN.

All rivers have their legends—why should the Hudson be legendless? There is scarcely an European river that is not beset by as many legends as will extend its fame to every quarter of the globe, so long as the finger of Time points to the dial which marks the world's duration. On the borders of the much-flattered Rhine there are not one hundred square feet unflowed by some marvellous story; nor does a castle in the contiguous country rear its taleless head, or turret, or roof, or whatever else the "culminating point," as Professor Silliman would say, should be called. All memory of the Rhine is embalmed in guide-books, upon which more labor has been spent than ever built Jerusalem, and from which thousands of interesting "foreign" letters have been stolen for American newspapers. Yet, with all its helps to fame, the Rhine will not be so famous as many of our rivers.

On this newly discovered continent there are a few wild spots whose unearthly, though natural attributes, have caused them to be made the themes of the most terrific histories; and these, with a few singular melodramatic incidents concerning the red man, form all that approaches towards American legendary lore. They are but "straws embalmed in amber." The nearest imitation of an out-and-out legend we have heard concerning home relates to a spot well known to all holiday-loving New Yorkers.

On the left bank of the Hudson, as you go up the river, and about eight miles from this city, is a huge rock which projects from the main land, and overhangs a series of small cliffs facing directly upon the water. The shape of this rock

Paris, Maine, Tuesday, July 21, 1846.

Old Series, No. 20, Vol. 15.

is peculiar. It is like an old fashioned church pulpit in decay. The front is split, and the spectator, in viewing the rent is certain to form the idea that a stroke of lightning or some convulsion of the earth occasioned it. You reach this rock after a toilsome journey over a spiral path, from the base of the cliffs, half a mile in length. The sensation created by looking down from the pulpit—or, as it is called, *The Devil's Pulpit*—is of a very thrilling nature. It seems as if you are hanging in the air, and on the point of being precipitated among sharp pointed promontories, trees whose rugged branches appear like warning arms outstretched to save you, and confused patches of soil and water. Yet no spot on earth is more secure than the Devil's Pulpit, which has stood in its tender-looking position, no doubt, since the creation of Adam. On the east corner of what may be, not inappropriately, termed the floor of the pulpit, is the imprint of a hoof, as curiously and indelibly imprinted, and sunk, like the carving in a coin die, beneath the surface. One hundred and forty years ago, the dwellers therabouts, and they were few, gravely asserted that this imprint was the result of one of Satan's visits to that place. The rent in the front of the rock was also attributed to the like remarkable agency. The story, treating of the devil's visit, and the cause, reads thus:

On the hills, and upon waste and barren land resided a Dutch shoemaker, by the name of Van Kuyper, with his wife and daughter. Van Kuyper was a man of great strength, and courage mounting to brute daring. He regarded his wife and child as a sportsman regards his dogs; that is with a jealous idea of ownership, and a purpose to assert his right to the property at the hazard of life and limb. Nobody loved to associate with him; but he got all the cordwaining business incident to a meagre population, for the simple reason that no other votary of St. Crispin lived within, at the least calculation, forty miles of the Devil's Pulpit. Even with the advantages of a monopoly of trade, Van Kuyper's occupation was unsteady and unprofitable. He had little clothing, few household goods, and a bare sufficiency of food of the coarsest kind. Every body hated and feared him, yet could assign no reasons for not extending to him the cordial right hand of fellowship. He lived quietly enough in his hut—for house it could only be called by courtesy—and worked, when occasion demanded, industriously at his lasts and leather. He often said that he was avoided for his poverty; but the neighbors would shake their heads, and ask if a man who had buried gold pieces in the wood could be poor. Van Kuyper had during the first year of his abode there, been discovered at daybreak in the wood, counting a quantity of gold coin, and sharing it with an Indian, of whom we shall presently speak. This act had been witnessed by a most righteous man among the people, on his return from a christening. Van Kuyper was told of the report, but he only modestly shook his head, growled like a sleepy bulldog, and said "Bah! the deacon drank too much!"—an assertion in which many shrewed persons placed considerable reliance.

No matter what the reason was, Van Kuyper was shunned, and, under the ban of social disapprobation, worked on regardless of all around him. One being only seemed to share the brute affection that he evinced towards his wife and daughter, and that being was a stalwart Indian, very powerfully termed the "White Cow" by his own people, dubbed by the whites, whom he heartily hated, "Old Larry." Larry was not old however, but between forty and fifty years of age, in the full vigor of health, as active as a boy, as brave as a lion, and as dishonest as an Indian among whites, generally is—by which we mean that he would steal every thing he could put his hands on.—

Several highway robberies which had occurred in the vicinity were charged upon this Indian; but, for want of conclusive evidence, the charges were never brought home, and the accused escaped. Vague insinuations had been heard that Van Kuyper knew something about these outrages, but his poverty protected him against any specific accusation. He, it was certain, never had anything but what was gained by hard labor; at his avocation. His association with Larry was accounted for by the fact that both were proscribed from public confidence, and were driven, by the want of the opposite of solitude, to each other's company for solace and relief.

At the end of five years, which had passed by without any extraordinary event, Van Kuyper burned his daughter. Neither he nor his wife betrayed any grief for their loss. On the contrary, the prospect of having one less to eat and be clothed, visibly lightened the hearts of both. On the heels of this circumstance trod another, which proved Van Kuyper's ruin. Another shoemaker took up his residence within half a mile of his cabin, and, as a matter of course, all the people carried their work to the new comer.—Desolation marked the habitations of the proscribed. In the eyes of the world (a small world to be sure) this misfortune was received with solid indifference. Larry and Kuyper kept their nightly meetings as before. Van Kuyper smoked his pipe as usual, and the Indian shared his rum with his companion precisely as he had always done. Six months after the arrival of the new shoemaker, as he was called, Van Kuyper began to show signs of distress. He wandered uneasily about the various dwellings scattered around, until at last, apparently in a starving condition, he entered the house of one who had least persecuted him, and asked for bread.

"Sit down," said he, pleasantly. "You are better yourself with terror. I spoke but jestingly when I mentioned hanging. Bring me my saddle bags!"

Tremblingly Van Kuyper obeyed.

"Now," said his curious companion, "be seated here on the basis of this rock, and let us eat—

He went from house to house with his petition, and received a moderate supply of provisions, with a great deal of the commodity offered by the first person of whom he begged food. The burthen of all this advice was—"If you cannot make a living here, go somewhere else!"

"All this his reply was—"The bones of my child are buried in this place, and those of my wife, judging from her present illness, are fated to the same destination. I cannot leave their graves to the care of strangers."

It was soon observed that Larry had also deserted Van Kuyper. Numerous reasons were assigned, but none were satisfactory. When questioned as to the cause, Larry would say, "Poor white man got no brains. He starves—he stays here."

When Van Kuyper heard of this, for the first time since his arrival there, he exhibited violent emotions. Swearing a horrible oath, he turned away, took his gun and scolded into the woods with the determination of having vengeance upon the "red devil," as he termed the Indian. He had not to search long. They met, and fought.

"What would I do? Give him anything, even my—" "Soul?" questioned the stranger, while his eyes glistened like fire.

"Soul!" echoed the rocks, so clearly that a hundred persons seemed to surround them and each took a soul.

"Ay!" exclaimed Van Kuyper boldly—"body and soul!"

"No great gift either," said the strange man with emphasis; "the one belongs to the hangman, and the other to—"

A shrill neigh by the horse prevented Van Kuyper from hearing the stranger's last words.

"Great or not, I have naught else," said Van Kuyper.

"Are you quite certain about your soul?"

Van Kuyper shivered with agitation as he reflected on what he had said. "No!" he screamed in mortal fright; "No, no! I can repent and live!"

"How? Look out from here. The moon shines so brightly that we can see every object for a mile around. Behold! You might simply by disposing of a commodity which is intangible, and to you of no account, have gold enough to purchase all that your eyes rest upon. What can you gain by remaining as you are? Poverty will kill your vital; the contempt of the vulgar herd will poison the current of your blood, and render you walking curse. Society, for no reason whatever, has outlawed you—conspired to rob you of your means of living. Turn a

against society. In your turn become the oppressor. Buy their homesteads, and then send them forth to seek asylums elsewhere."

"Good!" said Van Kuyper, with delight—"How shall I make the hand that will secure all this to me. Who will draw it up?"

"I will!" said the stranger.

"You! You are—

"Give yourself no uneasiness," hastily interrupted the other; "I am the friend of the desponding, the prime minister of despair, the only guardian of those whom misfortune stamps, in the estimation of the great human family, as criminals. If I hint of strange means, I but act upon the principle that desperate causes require desperate aids."

"Browse!" sneered the stranger—"On what? There is not as much pasture here as would preserve a goose from famine. Come and aid me to recover my loss. If I do not find the animal I am ruined, for he bears about with him all that I have valuable."

"Come on, then," said Van Kuyper; "I know every spot five miles around, and if the thief is not as dexterous as the devil himself, your horse is not beyond recovery."

The twain left the house together, and without saying a word more to each other, took the path which led to the *Devil's Pulpit*. Van Kuyper remarked that the horse could not have gone that way, as the footing was impractical.

"Not for him, sir," responded the stranger, "my horse travels where many of his species dare not—cannot go."

Van Kuyper offered no other objection, saying only that the animal "must be a remarkable one." He felt an irrepressible desire to ascend the path—an unaccountable satisfaction in being with the stranger. They did not speak until at the foot of the pulpit, when a shout from Van Kuyper broke the surrounding silence. On the rough uneven surface of the cliff was old Larry, the Indian, *dead*, and over him stood a coal-black horse, as motionless as though carved from the stone itself.

"What have we here!" exclaimed the stranger. "My God!" cried Van Kuyper, "we met in the wood to-day, and I struck him. He is dead—dead from the effects of my blow, and I am—

"A murderer!" quietly said the stranger, in a voice which was fearfully distinct and thrilling. The rocks seemed to be animated, for they echoed "A murderer!" in a thousand reverberations.

"What—what shall I do?" groaned Van Kuyper, with his face buried in his hands.

"Do?" said his companion, "go and be hanged, I suppose."

"No!" yelled Van Kuyper, starting up—"No, my crime is unknown except by you. I will not die! Your death shall insure my safety."

Thus speaking, he sprang at the stranger with the ferocity of a tiger, and endeavored in his agony and fear, to throw him over the cliff; but to his horror and amazement, the stranger did not budge! Like a statue grown from the earth, he remained erect and motionless.

"Sit down," said he, pleasantly. "You are better yourself with terror. I spoke but jestingly when I mentioned hanging. Bring me my saddle bags!"

Tremblingly Van Kuyper obeyed.

"Now," said his curious companion, "be seated here on the basis of this rock, and let us eat—

The inner man strengthened, the brain is clear and the nerves are steady. "So!"

As he spoke he unrolled to Van Kuyper's astonished eyes a solid repast, which he drew, article by article, from the saddle-bags.

"Stay!" said Van Kuyper, "ere I eat, promise me, on your word and honor, to observe secrecy as to what you have now seen."

"Eat—eat, I will not inform of you. 'Sdeath! I am not lost to all sense of honor; although honest and I have had some hard tussles ere now."

The repast was finished with speed, and then the stranger, with the most polished grace, began questioning Van Kuyper as to his future prospects.

"Prospects!" exclaimed the stricken man; "I have none, as I before told you. No hope remains for me."

"What makes so many debts not worth collecting? 'Tis this that sickens business to despair. And keeps from HONEST LABOR its reward."

While this in language of complaint we speak, We don't forget our many, many FRIENDS—

To THEM a debt of gratitude we owe:—

To THEM our gratitude we freely pay,

Buy'd by their kindness, still our bark shall sail,

Enjoy the pleasing calm—nor dread the boisterous gale.

For the amusement of all those who stand indebted to the Printer for TWO, THREE and four years' papers, and who have been frequently called upon for payment, we insert the following

PARADU.

To dun—or not to dun? That is the question, Whether 'tis better that the purse should suffer (From lack of cash) by baneful emptiness, Or by a gentle dun to fill it up:

To dun! to get the money—and be enabled To live—and pay our debts—it's a consummation Desirous to be wished. To dun—to be deny'd—Deny'd, with "CALL AGAIN." Ay, there's the rub; For in that "call again" what evill come—

What disappointment—sore chagrin—and woe—What time is wasted—and what shoes are worn In consequence—must give us pain!

It is this:—

That makes so many debts not worth collecting:

'Tis this that sickens business to despair.

And keeps from HONEST LABOR its reward.

While this in language of complaint we speak,

We don't forget our many, many FRIENDS—

To THEM a debt of gratitude we owe:—

To THEM our gratitude we freely pay,

Buy'd by their kindness, still our bark shall sail,

Enjoy the pleasing calm—nor dread the boisterous gale.

A SOFT BED.—The southern papers are very full of anecdotes concerning the state of things at the seat of war. Not the worst of these trifles is the following. It is peculiarly ridiculous:

